

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 05520 181434Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 ACDA-12 /106 W
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R 141412Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2581
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDEV, PGOV, PINT, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: PRESS REPORTS PESSIMISTIC; BOTHA KEEPS
DOOR OPEN

1. SOUTH AFRICAN PRESS REPORTS OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE
SUGGESTED PESSIMISM ABOUT THE CHANCES OF THE CABINET ACCEPTING
THE UN PLAN IN ITS CURRENT FORM, BUT THOSE SAME REPORTS ASSERT THE
POSSIBILITY OF REACHING AGREEMENT IS STILL HELD OPEN. IN HIS
TV INTERVIEW LAST NIGHT, (FULL REPORT SEPTTEL), FM PIK BOTHA
EMPHASIZED THAT EVEN IF SOUTH AFRICA COULD HAVE SUPPORTED THE
WALDEIM "DEVIATION" FROM THE WESTERN PROPOSALS ON SOUTH WEST
AFRICA, SWAPO WOULD CONTINUE TO THROW UP ITS "STUMBLING BLOCKS" TO
PREVENT A SETTLEMENT. BOTHA INDICATED THAT HE HAD "NOT YET
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GIVEN UP HOPE...WE ARE STILL TRYING TO RALLY THE WEST TO SUPPORT
THEIR OWN PROPOSALS WHICH THEY TOLD US WERE FINAL AND DEFINITIVE."
BOTHA CONCLUDED, "WE MUST REMAIN PATIENT SO THAT IF WE THEN
CANNOT BRIDGE THE GAP, WE MUST FEEL SURE IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS
THAT WE HAVE DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL
SETTLEMENT."

2. THE PRO-SAG "THE CITIZEN", SEPTEMBER 18, REPORTS THAT THE FIVE WESTERN POWERS HAD MADE THREE CONCESSIONS TO SOUTH AFRICA BUT HAD STOOD FIRM ON THE TWO KEY ISSUES OF THE SIZE OF THE UN FORCE AND THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE ELECTIONS. ACCORDING TO "THE CITIZEN" REPORTER, HE "WAS TOLD IN PRETORIA" THAT THE WESTERN REPLY WAS "NOT ALL BAD." CONCESSIONS WERE SAID TO HAVE BEEN MADE ON THE QUESTION OF THE CEASEFIRE, ON THE POLICE PRESENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND ON A GREATER WILLINGNESS BY THE WESTERN FIVE TO CONSULT SOUTH AFRICA. NEVERTHELESS, THE ARTICLE CONCLUDED THAT THE TWO MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCKS COULD RESULT IN A FINAL BREAKDOWN.

3. MEANWHILE, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, VORSTER WILL BE RETURNING TO PRETORIA TODAY, SEPTEMBER 18, IN ORDER TO CHAIR THE CABINET MEETING TOMORROW WHICH WILL TAKE UP THE NAMIBIAN ISSUE. SPECULATION IS NOW WIDE-SPREAD THAT VORSTER WILL ALSO INFORM THE CABINET OF HIS DECISION EITHER TO RETIRE OR TO MAKE HIMSELF A CANDIDATE FOR THE STATE PRESIDENCY. FOR THE FIRST TIME, PRESS REPORTS ARE SUGGESTING THAT THE STATE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S HEALTH IS FAR MORE SERIOUS THAN OFFICIAL MEDICAL REPORTS HAVE INDICATED.
EDMONDSON

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